

# *The* Springfield District Report



*March 2006*

## Message from Supervisor McConnell

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Dear Springfield District Residents,

I can hardly believe that this is my 23rd year in office. Time passes quickly when you are involved in the many issues we have faced over the years. I am fortunate to have been in the midst of such changes as Fairfax County emerged from a small county to an urban county with almost a million people within its borders.

Early in my career as your supervisor, the Fairfax County Parkway was just a dream, as was a new government center. As I look back on these accomplishments, I am thankful that our Board is committed to providing the roads, schools, and public facilities that are critical for our growing population. Although the Board is restricted by the Dillon Rule which limits its flexibility to manage our growth, we are working very hard to build and maintain an infrastructure so that our families have a safe place to live, work, go to school, and a transportation system to go back and forth.

As we reflect on this past year's accomplishments, our office is always looking ahead to the challenges before us. On the next two pages we've noted those accomplishments in the way of progress on the construction of many public facilities and roads. Additional articles in this newsletter provide more specific information on the Crosspointe Fire Station and the West Ox Public Safety Facility.

I am grateful to have a staff who works hard to serve our citizens and for the many citizens who express their thanks for our work. I appreciate your calls and comments on issues that are important to you. As always, I remain available to speak to your civic or homeowner association on any issue of concern to you and your community. I am honored to serve the Springfield District and wish each of you a safe and prosperous year.



Sincerely,

*Elaine McConnell*

## Public Facilities

- We broke ground for the new West Ox Public Safety Facility – a project which we have been working on for over two years. This facility will house a control command post for state and local public safety personnel and will give us a “state of the art” center for communication. All necessary agencies in the event of emergencies such as weather or terrorist attack will be co-located there as well as our 911 Center. Virginia State Police Division 7 call-takers and dispatchers will be housed in the facility as well as the Virginia Department of Transportation’s Smart Traffic Center. Construction of the building will be completed by November 2007. This is the first time Fairfax County will be able to have all the necessary people together to serve our citizens in the event of any emergency. It will probably be one of the first facilities of its kind in the country (see further information on page 6).
- Construction of our new Fairfax Central Fire Station #40 located on the corner of Legato Road and Lee Highway is almost complete. This will serve our citizens in that area and assure that there will be a six minute response time for emergencies. Our Fire Department strives to this goal and it is something this office follows carefully.
- Springfield District’s newest elementary school, West Fairfax Elementary School located off Lee Highway near Legato Road will open this fall. We are excited about the opening of this new school three years earlier than planned. This is a real plus for many of our new residents coming into the area as well as those who have been waiting for a school nearby.
- Our office has worked very hard in obtaining 97 acres of land near the intersection of the Fairfax County Parkway and Braddock Road. Most of this land, unused by VDOT for the Fairfax County Parkway project, was acquired at a reasonable price. The park, which has now been named “Patriot Park,” will have rectangular and diamond ball fields, a playground and tot lot, picnic areas, a small skate park, and trails that connect to the Countywide Trail System. We were so happy to find this land and get the support of the entire Board of Supervisors to purchase it. The additional fields are desperately needed for our children who are involved in sports and the park will be enjoyed by all. Planned completion of the first phase of the park will be in the spring of 2008.
- Construction of the Katherine Hanley Family Shelter, a facility that will house up to 20 families, will begin this spring and is anticipated to open in March 2007. The Shelter will be located near the intersection of Stringfellow Road and Route 29. This facility is for families who need assistance and training in becoming self-sufficient.
- In the southern part of the County, we broke ground for the Crosspointe Fire Station at the corner of Ox and Hampton Roads. This land, that I fortunately found for the County, is in an area that has a great need for the facility to meet the response time for our citizens in the area. We are looking forward to this station opening in January 2007 (see further information on page 4).

## Transportation Issues

- In October, we saw the expansion of Burke Lake Road to four lanes, a project we have worked on for over ten years. The completion of this road, from the Fairfax County Parkway to Lee Chapel Road, cost \$9.2 million.
- The last portion of Route 123 is to be completed July 2006. This is another critical connector between Fairfax County and Prince William County. The bridge across the Occoquan River is a Prince William County project; it is scheduled for completion in October 2006. We have worked 18 years on Route 123 and are delighted to see it almost completed.
- A project to four lane Stringfellow Road from I-66 to Route 50 is currently in the preliminary design phase. We will be following this progress very closely in hopes of getting it fully funded. A citizen information meeting on this project is scheduled for May 2 from 5-8 p.m. at Chantilly High School.
- The Fairfax County Parkway and Fair Lakes Parkway Interchange is in the design stage. We have secured \$26.2 million in funding toward the construction of this critically needed grade separated intersection. We are continuing to make this a top priority for full funding. It will take an additional \$25.8 million to complete this project.
- The four lanes for the unimproved portion of Route 29, from Fairfax County to the Prince William County line, are now in the design stage. We have asked that this road be put on a priority list because of its importance as a major connector between our county and Prince William County.
- I visited with the Attorney General to ask for his assistance in getting VDOT and the U.S. Army to come to terms on the construction of the last leg of the Fairfax County Parkway through the Engineering Proving Grounds off of Rolling Road. This project is fully funded but continues to escalate in price because of delays in the agreement between these two agencies.
- I continue to serve as chairman of the Board's Transportation Committee. We hosted a Transportation Summit on April 11 where nearly 200 participants discussed, among other topics, Dulles rail, smart growth and transit-oriented development.
- In 2005, I served as chairman of the Operations Board for Virginia Rail (VRE) and continue to serve on the board this year. As you may remember, I initiated the start of this rail in 1984 and am so proud to know that it now carries over 16,000 passengers a day and is cited as being one of the best commuter trains in the nation. Also, I serve on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and continue to support rapid transit.

## Goals for 2006

As I consider the year before us, I am thankful for your continued support which has provided our enviable quality of life in Fairfax County. I am also reminded of the responsibility our Board of Supervisors has to protect your investment in our County by providing the essential services and amenities you need and value. I am pleased to say that this past year we have done this; I would also like to list a few of our plans to expand on those efforts.

- Continue to seek additional tax relief for seniors
- Pursue further reductions in the real estate tax rate
- Establish additional partnerships to provide for athletic field lighting and artificial turf
- Address challenging transportation needs with available financing
- Identify funding to support additional police officers to maintain our safe communities
- Secure funding for neighborhood streetlights and trails



Pictured, left to right: Supervisor Elaine McConnell, Occoquan Watershed Coalition Member Bill Cole, Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy, Fire Chief Neuhard, Chairman Gerry Connolly, County Executive Tony Griffin and American Property Construction Company representatives.

## Construction Begins On Crosspointe Fire Station

A ground breaking ceremony was held for the new Crosspointe Fire Station on November 5, 2005. The station, located at the corner of Ox and Hampton Roads, will consist of approximately 14,600 square feet and will house an engine, advanced life-support unit and a ladder truck. The facility will be staffed by 51 personnel on three separate shifts and will provide coverage to parts of Fairfax Station and the rapidly developing areas around Laurel Hill.

The station, to be built at a cost of \$9.4 million, is the second fire and rescue station constructed using “green building design” or “sustainable” materials as part of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program. Be-

cause of the energy-efficient design, the Crosspointe station is predicted to save the County money by reducing total energy usage by 20-30 percent compared to a conventionally designed station. This could equate to a savings of approximately \$10,000 per year. American Property Construction Company of Alexandria, Virginia was awarded the contract for this project with an anticipated completion date of January 2007.

## Supervisor McConnell Hosts Tax Relief Workshop

On October 17, 2005, the Board of Supervisors approved an expansion of the Real Estate Tax Relief Program for the Elderly and Disabled. The change to this ordinance increases the net combined financial asset eligibility requirement from \$240,000 to the state maximum of \$340,000 for those who meet the age, disability and income requirements. The income limit also has been increased from \$52,000 to the fixed state maximum of \$72,000.



Supervisor McConnell speaking to citizens at Tax Relief Workshop November 17, 2005

A month after the Board's decision, Supervisor McConnell hosted a tax relief workshop for seniors and disabled persons. Desiree Baltimore and Paula Louers from the Department of Tax Administration's Tax Relief section were on hand to answer any questions regarding the changes. They also helped applicants determine if they met the qualifications for tax relief, and assisted with the application process. The change in the ordinance is retroactive to all of tax year 2005. Existing applicants who have already been certified for some level of exemption do not need to reapply. The Department of Tax Administration will automatically review partial exemptions and adjust them as applicable for the second installment due in December.

Any applicable refunds associated with the 2005 first installment tax bill will be processed in December. The Department of Tax Administration also will re-examine any 2005 applications previously denied due to the existing income and asset limits. New applications will still have to be filed for the 2005 tax relief under the new limits, but the Board of Supervisors has extended the deadline to December 31, 2006, for first-time applicants and for hardship circumstances.

Fairfax County provides real estate tax relief to seniors who are either 65 or older and people with disabilities. Seniors and those who are permanently and totally disabled who owned and occupied their residences in Fairfax County as of Dec. 31 of the preceding year may qualify for real estate tax relief from the county if they meet the following income and financial worth qualifications:

Gross Household Income	Amount of Relief	Net Combined Financial Worth
\$52,000 or less	100 percent	Up to \$340,000
\$52,001 to \$62,000	50 percent	Up to \$340,000
\$62,001 to \$72,000	25 percent	Up to \$340,000

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## **Board of Supervisors Break Ground For Public Safety Complex**

Supervisor Elaine McConnell and other members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors broke ground on November 21, 2005 for the West Ox Complex, former site of the "Camp 30" state correctional facility. The West Ox Complex will be situated on approximately 130 acres on West Ox Road between Route 29 and Route 66 in the Springfield District.

The project will transform the former state correctional facility to a multipurpose complex featuring the county's Department of Public Safety Communications (911 call center), Office of Emergency Management, Police Department Forensics and a bus operations/maintenance facility in partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The West Ox Complex also will contain the Department of Transportation's Northern Virginia Regional Operations Center as well as the Virginia State Police Division 7 call-takers and dispatchers.



Pictured, left to right: Supervisors McConnell, Smyth, Bulova, Connolly, Gross, Hudgins, Hyland, and County Executive Griffin

Development of the West Ox Complex will take place in phases. Phase one at the West Ox Complex will be the Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (PSTOC), which will include:

- Fairfax County 911 Call Center
- Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management and Emergency Operations Center
- Virginia State Police Division 7 call-takers and dispatchers
- Virginia Department of Transportation Smart Traffic Center

Construction of the building will be completed by November 2007. The estimated cost for PSTOC is \$122.5 million, which includes \$102.5 million for county functions and \$20 million for the Virginia State Police and Virginia Department of Transportation functions.

For more information and project updates, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/westox](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/westox).